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Abstract:

First of all, as a general comment, the impact of digital libraries and universal access in the 21st century is widespread and not limited specifically to a specific segment of the world communities. Because of the dramatic shrinking global dimension, the use of digital libraries and universal access has literally no boundary of any kind. However realizing that this CALA program is to address specifically the information needs of the Chinese American communities, and how to serve them better in this digital age, I shall present this talk with that emphasis in mind.

I shall not include in my talk the kind of "digital library resources" which we have been familiar with for some time, such as the large number of online and electronic databases, electronic publishing resources such as electronic books. I believe that the usefulness of these has been largely recognized. Instead, I will cover only the digital libraries for which massive amount of valuable multimedia resources have been created digitally or transformed to digital form. These resources were then further organized with appropriate metadata (or generally known to many information seekers as detailed descriptive annotations), and then effective technological methods and tools were used to provide both traditional and cutting-edge retrieval capabilities to the user communities.

“A picture worth a thousand words,” thus my talk will be highly visual. I shall use two projects which I am heavily involved as examples to show how activities like this can bring information services to the Chinese American communities and the world citizens in a way not possible before. These two projects are:

1. The Million Book Digital Library Project for universal access. Under the leadership of Prof. Raj Reddy of Carnegie Mellon University, I am privileged to serve as the co-PI of the US-China Million Book Digital Library Project, for which over 14 leading research and higher education institutions in China such as the Chinese Academy of Science, Peking University, Tsinghua University, Zhejiang University, Nanking University, and Fudan University in Phase I, and 8 others in Phase II in China, are massively digitizing invaluable Chinese and foreign non-copyrighted resources for universal access. In addition to discuss how and why these digital resources can be of invaluable use and value for the Chinese American community and the world
citizens for education, research, and enrichment, collaboration for providing collections for addition to this Million Book Universal Library will also be solicited.

2. Chinese Memory Net (CMNet) and Global Memory Net (GMNet). CMNet is one of the very first US National Science Foundation/International Digital Library Projects since 2000. It has established a model for international collaboration both for content development as well as for cross-disciplinary research specifically in the multimedia areas. Once it is possible for developing a multimedia digital library in one subject disciplinary or for one geographical area, it is upward scalable to include more subject areas and bigger geographical areas. This was the case with the expansion of the scope of CMNet to GMNet, which literally has space holder for all countries in the world. Because of the emphases of this program, I shall provide only the opening page of CMNet in this abstract:
From this page, one will be able to retrieve invaluable images of the First Emperor of China, for example, by conducting traditional keyword search using Google protocol, or using the cutting edge content-based image retrieval techniques. These will be demonstrated in real time during the presentation. The potential of this type of digital resources to Chinese American community will be elaborated in greater details during the presentation.

*CMNet* can cover all worthy contents related to Chinese culture, history, science and technology, etc. (this is why called Chinese memory). The value of this to Chinese American community should be self evident. On the other hand, *GMNet*’s provision of the world memory contents in multimedia format will be of great value to the Chinese American community as well since digital technology has made it possible for one to stretch their imagination and need for information and knowledge far beyond the traditional boundaries. These will be discussed in greater details during the online presentation.